

Internet Celebrity Marketing: A Consumer Trust Shaping Approach Based on KOL Opinions

—Taking Holiland as an Example

Yuxing Tian^{1,a,*}

¹Faculty of Arts, Hanjiang Normal University, Shiyan, Hubei, 442000, China

a. tianyuxing@hjnu.edu.cn

*corresponding author

Abstract: With the rapid development of the internet, it brings up the influencer's economic, and also already immerse into people's daily life. As a sponsor of influencer's economic, get through their own influence, act on their followers. This paper takes sweet desert brand: Holiland as the research object, aim to discuss about how to shape the image of KOL, and using the KOL identity. This study analyzes how the brand combines internet use, to make an impact on consumers' attitude and willingness to buy, in addition to increase the sales volume of products and brand awareness, to achieve brand transformation and upgrading, become the top of baking industry in China. This study adopted methods of literature review to analysis the characteristic of market and the strategy of spreading in systematically. Besides, it also provides relevant advices in marketing strategy. This research provides the basis of how to use the identity of KOL, lead the brand to take the road of sustainable development.

Keywords: influencer market, KOL, Holiland, internet celebrity economy, social media

1. Introduction

The internet celebrity economy, as a new type of social economy, has also received widespread attention worldwide in recent years. Its research background encompasses many aspects, including the popularization of the internet, the development of social media, changes in consumer behavior, and innovation in business models. The above factors have jointly contributed to the emergence and development of internet celebrity marketing, and created enormous opportunities and possibilities for its future development. This study will study the operational mechanism of internet celebrity marketing, further understand the operational mechanism of these links, grasp the key factors of development, and provide more effective internet celebrity marketing strategies for brands. This study also will predict the development trend of future internet celebrity marketing and provide forward-looking strategic guidance for brands. Meanwhile, by studying internet celebrity marketing, brands can understand their competitors' strategies and performance in internet celebrity marketing, thereby adjusting their marketing strategies and enhancing market competitiveness. Deeply understand and apply this marketing strategy to more effectively promote brands, products, and services, enhance brand influence, and increase market share. At the same time, it can establish an emotional connection

between the brand and consumers, which helps to enhance consumer loyalty and trust in the brand, and promote the spread of brand reputation. Furthermore, it is possible to monitor market trends and consumer demands, so that enterprises can adjust their marketing strategies in a timely manner, optimize products and services, and meet market demands.

The common idea about an influencer among the general public is "A person with a large follower base on social media. An influencer can be seen as a person who influences their audience' behavior. Brands are now increasingly using, fitness gurus, food bloggers, beauty bloggers, and fashionistas to create awareness and promote their products among consumers. Primarily influencers create brand awareness and brand visibility. Further brands can utilize influencers to build brand trust and authority. If the particular influencer is a well-known expert in that specific area there is a high tendency of people to fall for them and they start believing [1]. The integration of group communication and mass communication in the era of new media has led to the birth and rise of KOL marketing. Marketing activities led by key opinion leaders on self media platforms are increasingly receiving attention from businesses as a new marketing strategy. The core of KOL marketing concept lies in the KOL itself, The success of KOL marketing is closely related to the personal influence of KOL. KOL marketing builds effective communication between users and brands, providing guidance for brand product strategies. Self media KOL creates a scene that can generate empathy, resonance, and communication, build a sense of identity among fan groups, and influence their consumption behavior. KOL uses content to bring users into the scene for interaction and ultimately achieve brand exposure and sales promotion. Creating a scene is both a means and a goal [2]. In recent years, KOL marketing has been favored by many enterprises, KOL marketing fully utilizes the advantages of online platforms, leverages the public's trust in idols, celebrities, and so on, implements large-scale information dissemination, improves brand promotion effectiveness, and attracts more potential consumers. The core of KOL marketing is to connect brands and users. Widely solicit consumer opinions, and based on the personalized needs of consumers, try to display products as much as possible, so that the audience can get the desired product display and introduction [3]. At the same time, KOL should provide timely feedback, enhance interaction with consumers through private messages, comments, likes, and other forms, and enhance their sense of freshness and closeness to the product. The information flow generated by the KOL marketing model is bidirectional. On this interactive media platform, consumers not only receive product information, but also provide timely feedback on the product, which can provide valuable guidance for product strategy [2].

In marketing, social media influencers are seen as a valuable tool to reach and engage a specific target audience. Social media influencers refer to users on social media who have built a large network of followers by carefully curating and posting textual and visual contents especially narrations of their daily lives [4]. Over the past few years, the popularity of social media influencers (SMIs) has been growing exponentially, making influencer marketing (IM) prevalent in firm strategies [5]. The study revealed that social media marketing had a positive and significant influence on both brand awareness and purchase decision which means that the more frequent the social media marketing activities held by companies, the higher the level of brand awareness and the possibility to purchase will be [6].

Existing research on endorsement marketing has identified two major processes that may underlie the effect of brand endorsement on advertising effectiveness: identification with the endorser and perceived endorser credibility.

Influencers tend to directly address their followers in their posts, which connotes a certain closeness, and makes followers see them as peers. The ability to comment on influencers' posts and the possibility for interaction may strengthen the feeling [7].

Brands love social media influencers because of their ability to create trends and influence others to buy a product or service. "They partner with social media influencers to promote their products or services to followers, with the hope that the endorsement will lead to increased brand awareness and

sales,” said Associate Professor Dr. Wong Chee Hoo from the Faculty of Business and Communications at INTI International University. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wong highlighted that these variables (informativeness, entertainment, source credibility, source attractiveness and product matchup) are commonly used in research to study the impact of social media influencers on consumer attitude and purchase intentions. From the survey, source attractiveness strongly contributed to consumers’ attitudes toward social media influencers. The key findings of this research entail how consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by social media influencers’ characteristics. What was concluded is that the five factors including trust, looks, fame, personality, and promotion greatly influence the purchasing decisions of college students as seen in the results of the findings [8].

2. Restoration and Decomposition of Cases

KOL and key opinion leaders are usually individuals with professional knowledge, experience, or influence in a certain field, who have a large following and fan group base. KOL generally has the functions of guiding consumer behavior, promoting products, enhancing brand awareness, and establishing credibility in marketing.

This article is based on the case analysis method to structure the marketing case of the Holiland brand, focus on analyzing the advantages of successful marketing.

For the description of the case, one of company heirs in Holiland Luo Cheng, uses his identify to prompt the new products of Haoliland by his self media account.

Luo Cheng posted a promotion video about Holiland's new products on his media account. In the video, he showed the whole process of making new products, and personally tried the new cakes from Holiland, and then shared his feelings and comments. At the same time, he also showed the characteristics and advantages of Holyland’s new products to the fullest through humorous language and vivid pictures. At the end of the video, he encouraged fans to try new products. At present, Luo Cheng's Tik Tok account has more than 3 million fans, which not only enhances Holiland's popularity and influence, but also promotes the company's performance growth. In 2022, Holiland earned more than 2 billion yuan, ranking first among similar dessert brands in China. Holiland also opened thousands of direct chain stores in more than 70 large and medium-sized cities in China.

2.1. KOL Personal Creation

Luo Cheng entered the public eye with the title of one of the successors of Holiland. As an "old brand" in the sweet category, Holiland itself has popularity and a fan base. Furthermore, Luo Cheng himself had taken a dessert course at Harvard University and had a strong interest in baking, as well as superb skills. By documenting his daily cake-making process, he attracted a large number of fans. At the same time, he pays attention to the creation of his own character, creating a stark contrast with the traditional perception of the "wealthy second generation" in the public with an extremely introverted image of social anxiety, which makes him stand out among numerous short video creators, Luo Cheng eventually became a popular KOL.

2.2. Content Creation

Luo Cheng's self media account has strong verticality, and most of the videos are centered around the dessert of the Holiland brand. Based on the characteristics of Holiland's new products, combined with their own style and fan preferences, they have created an attractive promotional video. The video not only provides a detailed presentation and tasting experience of the product, but also features humorous language and vivid visuals, making the content both interesting and informative, attracting traffic. Luo Cheng and his brother introduced a semi-cooked cheese cake. Once launched, this product was highly sought after by dessert enthusiasts due to its dense texture and moderate sweetness,

becoming a signature product of Holiland. Afterwards, Luo Cheng was committed to continuously developing various delicious and interesting new products, mainly reflected in collaborating with various brands, such as Barbie, Harry Potter, Little Ghost Master, and a series of brands that already have extremely high popularity. In August 2022, Holiland first launched a series of products co-branded with Harry Potter, and compared to July, the marketing revenue has increased by about three times.

2.3. Publishing and Promotions

Luo Cheng posts the produced video on his self media account, and uses the platform's recommendation algorithm and fan base to quickly spread the video to more people. At the same time, the official promotion of Holiland has also been carried out through other channels, further expanding the influence of the video.

2.4. Interaction and Conversion

After the video was posted, Luo Cheng actively interacted with fans and answered their questions in the comment section. This interaction not only enhances the stickiness and loyalty of fans, but also further guides them to purchase new products from Holiland, achieving a transformation from attention to purchase. It also enables "data flow" to be "monetized".

3. Theoretical Analysis of Case Studies

Based on the 4P theory. The product Exploring Brand Building from Three Perspectives of Promotion and Place.

From the perspective of product, products promote brand rejuvenation and remodeling: Luo Cheng has transformed Holiland from a traditional baking brand into a new era online celebrity brand full of vitality and creativity through self-media platforms such as Tik Tok. And become the NO. 1 in the domestic similar dessert market. With his consistent image of social fear and grounding gas, and frequent and friendly interaction with netizens, Hollyland has gained higher recognition and goodwill among young consumer groups. Not only that, Hollyland is extremely sensitive to market demand and supply gap. With the thinking of the Internet, I constantly study new products, and the frequency of joint updates with various popular IP is very high, so that products always keep topical and fresh. For example, with Barbie, Harry Potter, Wang Laoji and other IP joint names, and develop new taste products, so that new products have both taste and innovative ideas. New products with constantly updated brands are highly sought after by consumers because of their fast updating frequency and high quality, which meet the current consumer demand.

From the perspective of place, the brand expands its market coverage: through the media platform, Hollyland can break through the original geographical restrictions and expand from the main battlefield in northern China to the first-tier and new first-tier cities in southern China. The new store was lined up by young consumers and became the new punching place for online celebrity. From the perspective of promotion, improve product sales: Luo Cheng often conducts activities such as product tasting and new product promotion in his media account. Through his personal experience and real evaluation, he effectively guides fans to buy Holiland products, thus improving product sales. Brands take advantage of consumers' herd mentality: to expand the brand's influence, they will not only make themselves an Internet online celebrity, but also directly promote their products, and even invite online celebrity, which has a larger number of fans, to promote them. Give full play to the advantages of "online celebrity" as an opinion leader, not only for fans, but also broaden the brand's popularity. Promotion uses KOL identity for interactive marketing: firstly, Luo Cheng interacts with netizens to increase the number of views and likes of videos, so as to improve the exposure of videos; When fans

are interested in the videos they post, and then share them with friends through likes, forwards, comments and other behaviors, the platform will automatically spread to potential customers, making the videos and products spread explosively.

4. Putting Forward the Marketing Strategy Suggestion on the above Cases

Based on the recovery and analysis of Holiland marketing cases, this study further integrates the specific programs and development paths of internet celebrity marketing, and refines a more durable and personalized marketing strategy.

4.1. Account Analysis Research

4.1.1. Ensuring Personal Image Matches Account style

The content of KOL's self media accounts revolves closely around the enterprise, showcasing both the personality of the characters and promoting the enterprise. This high degree of fit makes the enterprise's internet celebrity marketing more effective. And it can also make the content displayed by KOLs clearer and clearer, allowing consumers to understand product information more quickly.

4.1.2. Content Innovation and Personalization

The content of a company's social media accounts should be diverse and vibrant. Leveraging personalized content innovation allows corporate accounts to stand out from the myriad of internet celebrities, drawing the appreciation and attention of numerous fans. For examples include introducing innovative product concepts tailored to consumer demands, as well as collaborations with renowned and popular influencers. While pursuing visual innovation, it is crucial to ensure product quality.

4.1.3. Develop Clear Cooperation Terms

Clear cooperation terms should be established with KOL to prevent content that does not align with the corporate tone during the promotional process, which may negatively impact the brand. Content review must be strengthened, ensuring that KOL's published content undergoes multiple checks, adheres to modern socialist values, and avoids "vulgar" content, all while aligning with the brand's tone.

4.1.4. Establish a Risk Warning Mechanism

Company can consider to introduce a corporate management mechanism and hire professional operational talents. When faced with netizens' doubts about the materials used in product production, the company can promptly respond to address consumer concerns. The company's self-media accounts are overseen by a comprehensive service management team, enabling them to swiftly dispel negative rumors and protect the company's reputation. If consumers express doubts about the quality of Haolilai products, the brand promptly tests the products and leverages Luo Cheng's KOL status to provide explanations via their accounts.

4.2. PEST Analysis

4.2.1. Political Aspect

Actively respond to national policies, such as preferential policies for the food industry. During the epidemic, Horizon retail persisted in operating and provided daily necessities for the people, enjoying

the preferential policy of "exempting value-added tax on the income from providing life services to taxpayers" by the state, and reducing value-added tax by 1,77 million yuan.

4.2.2. Social Aspect

The pursuit of health and a quality lifestyle by consumers propels the industry towards higher quality and healthier products. Enterprises should develop products that better meet consumer needs. Initially, Luo Cheng, one of the founders, leveraged his status as a KOL to gather consumer preferences and needs on his social media account before initiating product development. For instance, the air cocoa cake, while retaining the original cocoa's bitterness, incorporates a small amount of sugar for flavoring, offering consumers a chocolate-like experience with reduced fat and sugar content. This enables consumers to enjoy desserts without any guilt and satisfy a variety of needs.

4.2.3. Technological Aspect

Leveraging technologies such as the Internet or big data offers businesses improved marketing strategies and customer service approaches. Holiland has implemented a strategy focused on its boss IP on the Tiktok platform, which in conjunction with Tmall's online sales, has garnered significant attention from a young demographic. Luo Cheng, one of the brand founders, has successfully attracted target customers through online content marketing. This approach not only boosts product sales but also elevates the brand's visibility and recognition among the target audience. Additionally, actively utilizing social media platforms for marketing and engaging with consumers bolsters brand loyalty.

4.3. Model Analysis (Main Analysis Objects)

4.3.1. Customer

Winning customers' trust and loyalty by providing high-quality products and services. Emphasize customer interaction and enhance brand awareness and customer stickiness through online and offline activities. For instance, Holiland usually set up themed concept offline stores in various regions. The design of the Kuanzhai Alley store in Chengdu integrates traditional cultural elements of Chengdu, showcasing its unique charm. The decoration style of Changsha Street store is full of modernity and modernity, providing consumers with a comfortable and enjoyable shopping environment. Wuhan Tiandi Store is the first market themed store in China, providing consumers with a variety of products and services. These themed stores have different decoration styles, product types, and service experiences, consumers can choose which to go according to their preferences and needs. Different stores will also carry out different offline activities, such as new product launches, pop-up themed events, and so on. These themed activities, combined with KOL promotion, attracted consumers and made the store a popular check-in destination for internet celebrities. This makes the brand more topical. In addition, Luo Cheng, one of the founders of Holiland, actively interacts with consumers online, such as collecting their taste preferences and developing new products, which makes consumers more engaged.

4.3.2. Company

Pay attention to enterprise construction and marketing promotion, establish a perfect sales network and after-sales service system. The purchasing channels of the Holiland brand are diverse, in addition to offline stores, it also has an online e-commerce platform, which adapts to the current consumption mode. Maintain high standards for the selection and training of offline store employees; Online response and processing are based on the questions and demands raised by customers. Eg: Netizens complained about the poor attitude of employees in offline stores in the comment section of Luo

Cheng's self media account. Luo Cheng personally apologized, immediately dealt with the employee, and offered a product apology to consumers, Holiland maintaining the brand's reputation.

4.3.3. Competition

Improve the visibility and reputation of the enterprise, pay attention to market dynamics and changes in consumer demand, adjust strategies and business models in a timely manner to adapt to market changes. Compare with others brand which in the same type, Holiland constantly updates its own products to adapt the constantly evolving preferences of consumers, this point have a reflect on its packaging and flavor. On Halloween in 2023, Holiland launched 7 new products with holiday restrictions, which received unanimous praise from consumers. In today's society that places a strong emphasis on Chinese cultural characteristics, the Holiland brand has capitalized on the popularity of "national style" and is dedicated to creating uniquely distinctive Chinese desserts, such as panda bamboo cakes, Chinese tea snacks featuring the "in Bashu" inscription, and Jinyun tea paste. The products boast distinct Chinese characteristics in terms of appearance, packaging, and taste. As one of the founders of Haoli Lai, Luo Cheng leverages his status as a KOL to showcase the creative process of new products on his social media accounts.

5. Conclusion

Internet celebrity marketing will have an direct impact on consumers' behavior. This communication model and its reliance on KOL's personal image, it is need to mould a positive character positioning. The homogenization of KOL is severe, and the market is highly saturated continuous innovation is needed to attract the continuous attention of consumers, and personalized services and precise positioning can increase user stickiness. While enjoying the benefits brought by KOL, special attention should also be paid to their potential negative impacts and corresponding solutions should be found.

References

- [1] Rathnayake, R. S., & Lakshika, V. G. P. (2023). *Impact of social media influencers' credibility on the purchase intention: reference to the beauty industry r.a.s.d.rathnayake.*
- [2] Dou, R.Y., (2020). *The Inspiration and Application Strategies of Self media KOL Marketing on Publishing Marketing - Based on the Encyclopedia of British Students(Chinese annotated version),Research on Publishing and Distribution,(05), 46-51.*
- [3] Wang, Y.J., (2022). *A Study on the Impact of KOLs on Consumer Return Behavior in the Context of Live E-commerce, Hebei Enterprises, (04), 38-40.*
- [4] Hamid, M. N. A., Pooi, C. K., & Reng, O. S. (2022). *Malaysian youth expectations of social media influencers (smi). Journal of Creative Industry and Sustainable Culture (JCISC).*
- [5] Vrontis, D. , Makrides, A. , Christofi, M. , & Thrassou, A. . (2021). *Social media influencer marketing: a systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. International Journal of Consumer Studies.*
- [6] Ardiansyah, F., & Sarwoko, E. (2020). *How social media marketing influences consumers purchase decision? a mediation analysis of brand awareness. JEMA Jurnal Ilmiah Bidang Akuntansi dan Manajemen, 17(2), 156.*
- [7] Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020). *Celebrity vs. influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and product-endorser fit. International Journal of Advertising, 39(2), 258-281.*
- [8] *International University and Colleges. The impact of social media influencers on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Available online at: <https://newinti.edu.my/the-impact-of-social-media-influencers-on-consumer-attitudes-and-purchase-intentions/>*